The Shared Service

Policy & Guidelines (2001)

Enhancing the Capacity of Rural, Northern and Fransaskois School Divisions to Provide Supports for the Diverse Needs of Students

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Table of Contents

I. Introduction 1

II. Shared Service Policy and Guidelines 3
- Policy 3
- Purpose 3
- Objectives 3
- Principles 4
- Guidelines 5
  - Participation 5
  - Program 6
    - Core Services 6
    - Bursaries 7
    - Funding Recognition 7
    - Shared Service Management 7
    - Responsibilities and Support: Saskatchewan Education 8
    - Accountability 8

III. Conclusion 9

Appendix A: Description of Shared Service Positions 10
Appendix B: Bursary Agreement Considerations 20
Appendix C: Shared Service Needs Assessments 21
Appendix D: Shared Service Plan and Agreement 22
Appendix E: Shared Service Management Committee Terms of Reference 23

I. *Introduction*

Working Together to Meet the Diverse Needs of Students in Rural, Northern and Fransaskois School Divisions

Ensuring access to equitable supports to meet the needs of all children and young people, no matter where they live in the province, is a foundational principle of the provincial education system. In 1982, Saskatchewan Education initiated the Shared Services Program to strengthen the capacity of rural school divisions to provide specialized supports such as speech and language development and psychological assessment for children in rural areas. The program operated on a second key principle, cooperation. By working together and sharing specialized resource personnel in Shared Services areas, school divisions were able to provide supports to students that they would not necessarily be able to afford on their own. The principles of equity and cooperation continue to be foundational values today, forming the basis and rationale for the renewed and expanded Shared Service Program as it is outlined in this document.

From 1998 to 2000, Saskatchewan Education undertook a review of the Shared Services Program in cooperation with Shared Services boards, staff, school divisions and other key stakeholders across the province. The purpose of the review was to identify issues and provide direction for the future of the program. Extensive discussions over an 18 month period revealed significant consensus regarding issues related to the program and refinements needed to address them. Key findings included:

- a high degree of support for the program and a call for additional funding, smaller and more Shared Services areas and more support services in each area to respond to increasing diversity and intensity in student needs;

- the need for an expansion of the type of support services provided, in addition to the traditional special education services and curriculum actualization, to include supports to Aboriginal education, low-incidence disabilities and interagency cooperation;

- strong support for integrated services and a call to use the Shared Services infrastructure to strengthen efforts at interagency cooperation and service integration with other human services providers;

- the importance of linking boundaries more closely to other human service providers;

- the need for a more equitable funding formula, with resources allocated to areas of greatest student need; and,

- the need for a management structure with an administrative focus rather than a governance focus.

This document, *The Shared Service Policy and Guidelines (2001)* describes a renewed and expanded Shared Service Program for rural, northern and the Fransaskois school divisions effective September 1, 2001. The aim is to enable school divisions to support teachers in providing responsive and innovative learning opportunities, to support children and youth to achieve their best, and to meaningfully engage family and community in support of learning.

Saskatchewan's children and youth have complex and diverse needs. By working in partnership with other school divisions, human service providers as well as family and community members, we can ensure these children and youth are provided with every opportunity for success.

II. Shared Service Policy and Guidelines

The Shared Service Program provides the organizational structure and funding recognition for boards of education to deliver specialized services to students with diverse needs and to the teachers working with them. Each Shared Service area identifies the needs of students requiring specialized supports, and provides a comprehensive array of services through cooperation among school divisions and with other community and human service agencies.

Policy

The Department of Education recognizes the need for school divisions to work together in Shared Service areas in collaboration with other human services to provide appropriate services for children and youth with diverse needs.

Appropriate services include:

- **assessment, educational diagnosis, educational programming and consultation for students at risk and/or students with special needs;**
- **speech, language, communication and early literacy development;**
- **Core Curriculum actualization; and,**
- **additional supports to address locally-determined needs.**

Purpose

The renewed and expanded Shared Service Program enhances the capacity of rural, northern, and Fransaskois boards to provide specialized, core services they could not provide on their own. Partnerships with other school divisions and local human service organizations such as health boards and social service agencies enable school divisions to deliver the comprehensive array of supports required by children, youth and families in support of learning. The Program is founded on the principles of equity and cooperation and encourages the effective and efficient use of regional human and financial resources.

Objectives

The objectives of the Program are to:

- enable rural, northern and Fransaskois school divisions and communities to provide a comprehensive array of services to support teachers, children and youth in school;

- encourage interagency partnerships as well as coordination and integration of services at the regional levels to maximize effectiveness and efficiency;

- strengthen access to specialised services in rural, northern and Fransaskois school divisions;

- promote and facilitate implementation of Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children, including strategies for early childhood, prevention, service integration and family and community involvement;

- facilitate the creation of effective working relationships and resource sharing among school divisions, laying the foundation for future restructuring; and,

- promote and facilitate the actualization of Core Curriculum including the Common Essential Learnings and the Adaptive Dimension with the goal of maximizing the potential of all students whose needs are to be met within Core Curriculum.

Principles

The following interrelated principles guide the Shared Service Program:

1. **Child-Centred**
   Children and young people are at the heart of the education process. Their needs and best interests are the primary consideration in providing programs and services. Their social, emotional and physical needs, experiences and characteristics and their individual goals are central to program planning and evaluation.

   It is understood that children and youth are usually best served in the context of their families. Thus services and supports are available that strengthen the family unit, create positive relationships between parents and children, reinforce family responsibility and build capacity for self-sufficiency and healthy child development.

2. **Teacher Empowerment**
   Teachers are central to student learning and development. Supports for teachers and for the learning environment are critical to effective learning environments. Significant supports such as access to specialists, additional classroom resources, continuous professional development opportunities and collaborative, team-building environments are required to enable teachers to provide responsive and innovative learning opportunities including a full range of appropriate instructional practices.

3. **Equity**
   Equity is about fairness. This principle goes beyond treating everyone the same to an understanding that different divisions and areas of the province have different needs, requiring specialized or additional resources to address their unique circumstances. The objective is to ensure that resources are directed to areas with highest need.

4. **Cooperation and Partnerships**
   By working together and building collaborative partnerships, school divisions develop the capacity to provide supports they could not provide on their own. The provision of the comprehensive array of supports needed for children to succeed in school can only be achieved by working in partnership with other school divisions and local human service agencies. Collaborative partnerships are characterized by shared identification of needs, shared planning, shared resources and shared responsibility in the provision of services. Interagency cooperation and integrated services are an integral part of the Shared Service Program.

5. **Effectiveness and Efficiency**
   The Shared Service Program fosters the effective and efficient use of division, community and area resources. It enhances the capacity of individual human service organizations and enables the provision of a comprehensive array of services, responsive to the unique needs in a local area.

6. **Shared Responsibility and Accountability**
   Educators, school divisions, other human service providers, families and community members share responsibility for the healthy development and education of children and young people. The efforts of all partners are coordinated in monitoring the effectiveness of progress toward positive outcomes for children and youth. The purposes of measures of effectiveness are to inform program improvements, to provide direction to enhance professional practice and to maintain public confidence.

Guidelines

Guidelines accompanying the Shared Service Program include elements related to **participation** and **program**. These are described in the following sections.

Participation

The participation of boards of education in the Shared Service Program is demonstrated through the following:

- Each school board (excluding urban school divisions in Saskatoon and Regina) shall be part of a Shared Service arrangement.

- School boards have an obligation to the children in their care, regardless of the source of revenue.

- All boards of education are required to provide the programs and services identified in Saskatchewan Education policy.

Program

Shared Service areas are organized to include collaborating school divisions with a total student population of approximately 3500. Where possible, Shared Service areas are linked to major centres, Health districts and Social Service regions.

Core Services

Core services are provided by qualified staff in each Shared Service area, providing appropriate levels of support for:

- educational assessment, diagnosis, programming and collaborative consultation for students at-risk and those with special needs;
- speech, language, communication and early literacy development; and,
- Core Curriculum actualization.

(See Appendix A.)

Additional services are intended to further support the above or to address local needs through locally-determined services such as:

- Aboriginal education;
- low incidence disabilities;
- integrated services/case management;
- resource-based learning;
- counselling;
- early childhood;
- behaviour intervention; and/or,
- learning technology.

Partnership with other human service providers will facilitate delivery of a comprehensive array of services required to meet the diverse needs of children, youth and their families.

Shared Service Program supports must be available in all schools in the Shared Service area. All students should have access to the services and supports required to meet the mandate of the legislated provision; that is, each student has the right "to receive instruction appropriate to that person's age and level of educational achievement" [s. 142(1) (b), *The Education Act, 1995*]. Special provisions accrue to students identified pursuant to s. 186, which speaks to students with disabilities.

Bursaries

Recruitment of specialized staff remains a challenge. In instances where a Shared Service area is unable to recruit qualified staff, the Shared Service funding may be used as a bursary to allow personnel to gain expertise and certification/licence in a required area. It is recommended that Shared Service areas develop staff recruitment and development plans. (See Appendix B.)

Funding Recognition

Shared Service funding recognition is a component of the Foundation Operating Grant. As such, it is consistent with general cost sharing between the province and local school boards. Funding recognition is allocated on a per-student basis with a differential rate to reflect geographic differences (areas larger than 22,000 square kilometres will receive a higher per-pupil rate.) Funding for the Fransaskois school division and the northern school divisions will reflect their unique circumstances.

Shared Service Management

The plan for each Shared Service area will be directed by a Management Committee made up of senior officials from participating school divisions. In addition, senior officials from neighbouring health districts, regional Social Services, Aboriginal service agencies and others determined within the Shared Service area are encouraged to participate. The objective is to provide the opportunity for multi-sectoral involvement and partnerships in meeting the diverse needs of children and youth. These partnerships may include joint funding, shared needs assessment, collaborative problem solving and integrated services to meet identified needs.

The Management Committee is responsible for creating a **needs-based service plan** for the Shared Service area that will be up-dated annually. This plan is subject to the approval of the boards comprising the Shared Service area, the funding partners and the regional office of the Department of Education.

Such approval by the regional office of the Department of Education shall include:

- the agreement among participating school boards;
- the service plan based on the needs assessment (See Appendix D); and,
- the staffing allocation to implement the plan. (See Appendix E.)

The Management Committee is also responsible for arrangements regarding staff contracts, staff development needs and planning as well as operational details.

Terms of Reference for Shared Service Management Committees are in Appendix E.

Responsibilities and Support: Saskatchewan Education

The successful implementation of Shared Service positions requires close cooperation with Saskatchewan Education regional office staff and provincial educational consultants. To support these positions, a number of initiatives will be required. Examples include:

- organizing and co-ordinating orientation, training and networking sessions with Shared Service personnel;
- developing specific activities and resources to support the work of Shared Service personnel and service plans;
- providing specific, strategic support pertaining to particular initiatives related to such areas as Core Curriculum, needs assessments, etc.;
- facilitating information sharing among Shared Service, regional and provincial personnel; and,
- collaborating in the evaluation of effectiveness.

Accountability

Accountability for the Shared Service Program will be achieved through:

- preparation and approval of a needs-based service plan by the Management Committee;
- annual review and approval of the service plan by participating school boards, the Management Committee, funding departments and agencies;
- demonstration of partnerships among a number of stakeholders in planning and delivery of services; and,
- collaborative regional program reviews. (See Appendix D.)

III. Conclusion

A basic value of Saskatchewan Education is to build capacity for collaborative solutions to meet the needs of children and youth. With the increasing complexity, intensity and diversity of student needs, there has never been a greater need to join together to maximize effectiveness and efficiency in our service to children and young people.

In keeping with the spirit of collaborative effort and in response to concerns related to the original Shared Services Program, a review of that program was instigated, inviting input from educators, education partners and stakeholders. The result of this review has been a transformation of the original design culminating in significantly more Shared Service areas, enhanced funding and a wider scope in terms of supports offered.

The spirit of the original Shared Service Program, however, has remained unchanged. The spirit is captured in the phrase *together, we're better*. Together - with other school divisions, human services sectors, agencies and organizations - individual school divisions have enhanced potential to assess the needs of their children and youth. Moreover, they have enhanced potential to respond with the service and expertise that is not available when school divisions stand alone.

Saskatchewan has an exciting history of cooperation and collaboration through the development of local capacity and community-based solutions. The spirit goes beyond collaboration with other school divisions. The Shared Service Policy demonstrates commitment at all levels to join together to provide for the needs of young people. Because in Saskatchewan, together we're better, and when we are planning for our children and youth, *we deal in futures*.

Appendix A: Description of Shared Service Positions

The sample descriptions in this appendix are broad-based and intended as examples only. Each Shared Service Management Committee will need to develop specific job descriptions that will address the unique needs of the area.

The appendices are as follows:

A-1 Special Education Support Position Description

A-2 Speech and Language Support Position Description

A-3 Curriculum Support Position Description

A-4 Integrated Services and/or Case Management Support Position Description

Appendix A-1: Special Education Support Position Description

SAMPLE

The sample descriptions in this appendix are broad-based and intended as examples only. Each Shared Service Management Committee will need to develop specific job descriptions that will address the unique needs of the area.

Title:
There are a number of titles that could apply to positions providing support for students with diverse needs. Various agencies have called these positions by different names. Each Shared Service area will determine the working title for their staff. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Educational Psychologist;
- Educational Assessment and Programming Support;
- Special Education Consultant;
- Assessment, Counselling and Programming Support; and,
- Diversity Needs Consultant.

Note 1: *The Psychologists Act (1997)* gives **reserve title** and **reserve function** to persons engaging in the work of psychology. This Act assigns responsibility for the registration and related processes identified under the bylaws to the College of Psychologists. The Act (including the bylaws) has not been proclaimed into law as of April 1, 2001.

Note 2: Educational Psychologists and special education personnel require a valid Saskatchewan teaching certificate and must be hired as teachers.

Goal:
To provide support in the Shared Service area to students, school and division personnel as well as parents and the community when learning or behavioural difficulties adversely affect students in achieving the goals of education in Saskatchewan.

Rationale:
Within the education system and related human service organizations, personnel in this position respond to the diverse needs of students, staff, parents and community, providing assessment, programming, counselling and consultation services.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Participate as a member of a student services team in identifying strengths and areas requiring support, determining priorities and responding in the context of a collaborative ethic.

- Consult with school division personnel to identify student strengths and areas requiring support, the educational implications of these and strategies to enhance learning and interpersonal relations.

- Collaborate with school-based and/or division personnel to gather classroom-based data in order to collaborate in designing and implementing instructional and behavioural strategies and interventions.

- Provide informal/formal assessment and interpretation upon request following school-based assessment and intervention to assist in planning, goal setting, and identification of instructional, behavioural and evaluation interventions and strategies.

- Provide counselling for students, parents or community groups for prevention or amelioration of learning and behavioural difficulties.

- Participate in the planning and delivery of staff development and participate or assist in program evaluation and research activities.

- Develop and maintain a current knowledge and skills base in assessment, instruction and counselling for students with exceptional needs.

Qualifications:

- A professional teaching certificate from the province of Saskatchewan.

- Successful teaching experience with pre-school to grade 12 students.

- Knowledge, skills and abilities consistent with the nature and responsibilities of the position.

- Professional training at the Master's level in Educational Psychology/Special Education that includes competencies required to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the position.

Appendix A-2: Speech and Language Support Position Description

SAMPLE

> ***The sample descriptions in this appendix are broad-based and intended as examples only. Each Shared Service Management Committee will need to develop specific job descriptions that will address the unique needs of the area.***

Title:
There are a number of titles that could apply to positions providing speech and language support. Various agencies refer to these professionals by different names. Each Shared Service area will determine the working title for their staff. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Speech-Language Pathologist;
- Speech-Language Consultant;
- Communication Disorders Specialist; and,
- Speech Therapist.

Note: *The Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists Act* stipulates in Section 22.1 that:

> No person other than a person registered with the association as a speech-language pathologist shall use the titles 'Speech-Language Pathologist,' 'Speech Therapist,' 'Speech Correctionist,' 'Speech Clinician,' 'Speech-Language Consultant,' 'Communicologist,' 'Communications Disorders Specialist,' 'Logopedist,' or any word, title or designation, abbreviated or otherwise, alone or in conjunction with others, to imply that the person is a registered speech-language pathologist.

Goal:
To provide support in the Shared Service area to students, school and division personnel, as well as parents and community when educational and/or social progress toward achieving the goals of education is adversely affected by speech and/or language difficulties.

Rationale:
Speech, language and literacy are central to communication. Personnel in this position respond to speech, language and early literacy needs of students and those who work with them, providing a professional range of services including prevention, assessment, direct instruction, consultation, collaboration, staff development and information sharing.

Duties and Responsibilities:
- Participate as a member of the student services team in identifying strengths and needs, determining priorities and responding in the context of a collaborative ethic.

- Collaborate in transition planning for pre-school children with communication needs.

- Participate in school-based screening of the communication needs of new students.

- Communicate with school personnel and parents regarding individual assessment and programming including, but not limited to, needs associated with communication delays and disorders, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, behavioural/emotional issues or learning disabilities.

- Demonstrate or provide direct individual, small group and large group intervention and instruction.

- Monitor the acoustic environment in educational settings.

- Consult with teachers, parents, students and community agency personnel regarding students' communication needs.

- Provide assessment for and advise on the implementation of augmentative communication systems.

- Provide staff development training and participate or assist in program evaluation and research activities.

- Develop and maintain a current professional knowledge and skills base in speech and language assessment and programming for students with exceptional needs.

Qualifications:
- Licensure pursuant to the *Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists Act* if identified in accordance with section 22.1, which includes professional training at the Master's level in Speech/Language Pathology and competencies required to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the position.

- Knowledge, skills, and abilities consistent with the nature and responsibilities of the position. Successful teaching experience would be an asset.

Appendix A-3: Curriculum Support Position Description

SAMPLE

The sample descriptions in this appendix are broad-based and intended as examples only. Each Shared Service Management Committee will need to develop specific job descriptions that will address the unique needs of the area.

Goal:
To demonstrate Saskatchewan Education's commitment to enhance the quality of education across Saskatchewan by building Shared Service area capacity in the actualization of Core Curriculum.

Rationale:

- *The Education Act, 1995* places the responsibility for curriculum development on the Department of Education. To ensure that curriculum actualization occurs, there must be an effective plan with provincial, regional and local initiatives complementing and supporting each other.

- Change theory indicates that inservice provided in isolated sessions is not enough to ensure that change will occur. Without continuous engagement after the first year, it is unlikely there will be positive effects on student learning.

- For change to occur, the vision must be clear, the teacher's capacity (knowledge and skills for teaching and learning) must be strong, motivation must be evident, resources must be available and a plan must be in place to carry out the change. If any one of these is not in place, change will be slow, with frustration along the way.

- *Effective change is built on a shared vision supported by planning that builds capacity through the enhancement of teachers' knowledge and skills including reflective practice. Instructional resources must be available. Each of these must be in place.*

- Optimal learning takes place best where knowledge is applied immediately to the teaching situation. It is difficult for teachers to transfer knowledge gained in general inservice to a specific subject area or a particular classroom situation.

- Teachers learn best from colleagues who are accessible and who can provide inservice, demonstrate lessons, mentor, team teach, recommend resources, facilitate sharing, assist with development of units of study, organize study groups and coach informally or formally.

- Professional development is most effective when it is needs based and when opportunities for choice are provided.

- A high quality professional development program is characterized by multiple strategies including study groups, guided practice, mentoring, reflection, observation, practice and feedback.

- A major goal of public education is to provide children and youth with the educational opportunities and benefits required to become contributing citizens in an ever-more democratic society. The extent to which any curriculum is effective in meeting students educational needs is the extent to which there is flexibility in the curricular demands and the instructional and evaluative strategies utilized to draw upon student strengths to ameliorate areas of weakness.

Objectives

- To strengthen support for implementation and renewal of Core Curriculum.

- To support school divisions in assessing/monitoring the actualization of Core Curriculum including the use of the Adaptive Dimension to tailor curricular expectations for maximum student success

- To encourage reflective practice among educators.

- To promote the use of technology for teaching and learning.

Shared Service Curriculum Position

- Candidate will possess a Saskatchewan Teaching Certificate.

- Candidate will be a subject specialist with knowledge and skill to support Core Curriculum components and initiatives including: Aboriginal Education, Multicultural Education, Gender Equity, Common Essential Learnings, Adaptive Dimension, Resource-Based Learning, Instructional Approaches, Assessment and Evaluation.

Responsibilities and Support: The Shared Service Curriculum Position

General

- Provide support to classroom teachers in the actualization of specific curricula.

- Model learning, instructional and assessment strategies to assist teachers in the actualization of curricula.

- Facilitate teacher involvement in personal professional development.

Specific

- Support teachers in providing classroom environments that address the learning needs of students, including Aboriginal students and students with diverse learning needs.

- Collaborate with classroom teachers in the selection and use of resources that support curricular objectives.

- Assist teachers in the use of technology, including the Saskatchewan Education web site, for support in the actualization of curricula.

- Participate in orientation, training and networking sessions.

- Provide support services in the form of one-on-one mentoring and small or larger group activities.

- Collaborate in the development and/or implementation of processes to identify specific areas of need and appropriate strategies to address the areas of need.

- Gather and/or develop specific activities in consultation with school, school division and appropriate department personnel.

- Maintain a record of visits, activities undertaken and evaluation of progress/impact.

- Utilize evaluation data to refine specific activities and processes.

- Share evaluative data of activities/processes with department personnel as appropriate.

- Other duties, as assigned, depending on assessed need.

Appendix A-4: Integrated Services and/or Case Management Support Position Description

SAMPLE

The sample descriptions in this appendix are broad-based and intended as examples only. Each Shared Service Management Committee will need to develop specific job descriptions that will address the unique needs of the area.

Goals:
To facilitate service integration in order to enhance the effective and efficient delivery of services in a holistic and comprehensive manner to best meet the needs of children and families.

Rationale:
There must be effective local, division and regional planning, including co-ordination of services related to behavioural interventions, medical services, prevention and early intervention as well as other community-determined initiatives.

Objectives:
- To support the community in identifying its strengths and needs related to the pre-school and school-aged population.
- To assist the community with developing an integrated plan to increase local capacity to address the needs of children and youth through the delivery of school-linked services.
- To assist schools and communities in identifying local resources that support diverse student needs.
- To provide coordinated case-management support that draws together the comprehensive array of service providers to address complex situations.

Preferable Qualifications:
- Experience and training in community development.
- Demonstrated effective communication skills.

- Proven background in group processes (e.g., establishing partnerships, collaborative relationships, conflict resolution, mediation, inclusive processes).

- Demonstrated ability to work with families of diverse backgrounds.

- Training typically obtained through post-secondary education in such fields as counselling, recreation, community development, education, social work, health and human justice.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Collaborate in the development of tools and resources for local areas to assess their needs and identify their strengths in collaboration with other human service providers, agencies, families and organizations.

- Provide case management coordination.

- Provide linkages to and coordination with other human service sectors and their programs, including the Regional Intersectoral Committees.

- Facilitate a plan to increase local capacity within the Shared Services area to meet the identified needs of pre-school and school-aged children and youth.

- Facilitate communication among the human service providers, agencies, families, school personnel, local elected officials, and organizations to enhance the co-ordination and integration of services for children and youth.

- Collaborate in planning prevention activities and early intervention initiatives (e.g., recreation, early childhood opportunities, intervention with school-age students at risk).

- Collaborate with regard to systemic solutions to broad-based issues (e.g., racism in the community, violence, family literacy, poverty).

Appendix B: Bursary Agreement Considerations

According to the *Shared Service Policy and Guidelines (2001):*

> ***Shortages of specialized staff remain a challenge. In instances where a Shared Service area is unable to recruit qualified staff, funding may be used as a bursary to allow personnel to gain expertise and certification/license in required areas. It is recommended that Shared Service areas develop staff recruitment and development plans.*** **(p. 7)**

There are several considerations for Shared Service Management Committees in terms of the use of resources provided through the Shared Service Program for expertise in the required areas of service to students (Speech and Language, Educational Psychology and/or support for Core Curriculum actualization). These concerns, among other considerations, may be grouped according to responsibilities of the Management Committee (or hiring board) and responsibilities of the bursary recipient.

Responsibilities of the Management Committee (or Hiring Board)

- The need of the Shared Service area: Considerations regarding the failure to recruit qualified staff.
- The process for the recruitment of bursary applicants, including
  - a wide or narrow search for potential applicants;
  - a format for the training bursary application; and,
  - a process for the review of applications.
- The amount of the bursary to be paid. For example,
  - a fraction or percentage of the annual salary;
  - the cost coverage of tuition, books, and/or living and travelling expenses; or,
  - a combination of the above.
- The period of time over which the bursary is extended.
- The consequences for the bursary recipient of:
  - failing to complete the agreed-upon program of study; and/or,
  - failing to return to the Shared Service area for the agreed-upon length of time.

Responsibilities of the Bursary Recipient

- Acceptance in a program leading to qualification in an area specified by the Management Committee.
- Service to the Shared Service area. For example, *x amount of time for each year or part of a year taken as leave provided by the bursary*;

Other Considerations

- Implications of local agreements on the arrangements for the bursary.

Appendix C: Shared Service Needs Assessments

The Shared Service Policy and Guidelines (2001) calls for the provision of services based on a needs assessment involving all participating and contiguous human service agencies. The comprehensive needs assessment should focus on the needs of teachers in addition to required student support services and curriculum actualization.

In *Strengthening Supports*, the Minister's Response to the Special Education Review, the Minister indicated that Saskatchewan Education policy would convey:

> the expectation that every board of education will update their Special Education Master Plan to publicly communicate how they have organized supports for students with diverse needs, effective Fall, 2002. (p. 8)

Shared Service Management Committees are encouraged to develop a reference committee with representation that involves all affected sectors. Such a reference committee would include:

- parents;
- students;
- teachers;
- system support staff, including Shared Service staff;
- Regional Superintendents of Curriculum and Instruction, Regional Superintendents of Children's Services as well as Regional Intersectoral Committee Coordinators; and,
- representation from human service agencies in the Shared Service area, including but not limited to District Health Boards, Regional Social Services, Aboriginal service agencies and other community based organizations (CBOs).

It should be noted that District Health Boards have an active program of periodic needs assessments. Partnering with District Health Boards may tap into resident expertise, reduce redundant efforts across the community and provide an effective basis for joint service planning.

The actual needs assessment is a process that invites participants to reflect on current needs of children, youth, families and teachers as well as the effectiveness of current programs and services. The needs assessment envisions more effective and efficient ways of addressing identified needs. Participants in a needs assessment include, but are not limited to:

- parents;
- students;
- teachers;
- school system support staff; and,
- front-line service providers from other human service areas.

Appendix D: Shared Service Plan and Agreement

Following consultation with regional office staff, the Management Committee of each Shared Service area, with the approval of participating boards shall forward to the regional office, the following documentation for approval:

- **A copy of the agreement signed by the participating boards of education and other participating human service agencies.** Include with this agreement relevant documentation identifying service arrangements between boards of education and human service departments or agencies whereby the service arrangement reflects the intent of the Shared Service Policy. This document should be included even if there is no formal participation by these agencies on the Shared Service Management Committee.

- **Documentation reflecting the needs assessment(s) used to identify the student and teacher support services to be provided through the Shared Service Program.** Needs assessments are conducted by participating school divisions in the Shared Service area, preferably in collaboration with parents, students and other human service departments or agencies. Documentation of the needs assessment will include identification of:

    - student and teacher needs, identifying strengths and areas requiring support;

    - education system programs and services necessary to address student needs; and,

    - programs and services provided through partnerships with other human service agencies that will meet student needs.

- **Identification of staff roles and percentage full time equivalent for each role to be supported through the Shared Service Policy.**

- **Documentation of the involvement of Shared Service staff in the development of Personal Program Plans for students within the low-incidence populations.** The complexity of the needs of students with low-incidence disabilities requires the expertise of support professionals.

Appendix E: Shared Service Management Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Shared Service Program is to enhance the capacity of boards of education and communities to provide a broad array of educational and other support services to meet the needs of their children, youth and families. These services will be organized through cooperation among school divisions and other human service organizations to offer the specialized services they cannot provide on their own. The focus is on partnerships and interagency collaboration to make efficient and effective use of regional resources.

Objectives

The objectives of the Shared Service Program are to:

- enable rural, northern and Fransaskois school divisions and communities to provide a comprehensive array of services to support teachers, children and youth in school;
- encourage interagency partnerships as well as coordination and integration of services at the regional levels to maximize effectiveness and efficiency;
- strengthen access to specialized services in rural, northern and Fransaskois school divisions;
- promote and facilitate implementation of Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children, including strategies for early childhood intervention, service integration and family and community involvement;
- facilitate the creation of effective working relationships and resource sharing among school divisions, laying the foundation for future restructuring; and,
- promote and facilitate the actualization of Core Curriculum including the Common Essential Learnings and the Adaptive Dimension with the goal of maximizing the potential of all children and youth whose needs are to be met within Core Curriculum.

Membership

The Shared Service areas shall each be managed by a Management Committee made up of senior officials from participating school divisions. In addition, senior officials from neighbouring Health districts, regional Social Services, Aboriginal service agencies and others as determined in the Shared Service area are encouraged to participate. The objective is to provide the opportunity for multi-sectoral involvement and partnerships in meeting the diverse needs of children and young people. These partnerships may include

joint funding, shared needs assessment, collaborative problem solving and integrated services to meet regional needs.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Management Committee shall:

- establish clear policies regarding the person(s) responsible for supervision and evaluation of staff;
- prepare an annual needs-based service plan to support the learning and human service needs of children and youth for approval by partner boards and human service agencies;
- ensure that the regional director of education or designate is invited to attend at least one meeting per year in order to share information regarding services provided by the Shared Service area and plans for accountability;
- use collaborative processes to ensure provision of necessary services and supports for children, youth and their teachers according to the needs-based service plan;
- assume human resource management responsibilities, including staffing and professional development;
- establish administrative practices to ensure fiscal management and administrative support for Shared Service staff;
- identify a facilitating board to be the point of contact for the Shared Service area;
- ensure that services provided through the Shared Service agreement are available to all schools and all children and youth served by boards of education in the Shared Service area;
- ensure accountability measures for program delivery and financial management;
- arrange with an appropriate board(s) or agencies to hold staff contracts; and,
- meet at least quarterly.

Service Provision

The Management Committee shall prepare an annual needs-based service plan to provide the supports required to meet the human service needs and learning needs of children and youth, including core and locally-determined services. Core services shall include appropriate levels of support for:

- assessment, educational diagnosis, educational programming and consultation for students who are at risk and students with special needs;
- speech, language, communication and early literacy development; and,
- Core Curriculum actualization.

Locally-determined support services may include support services for Aboriginal education, low-incidence disabilities, integrated services/case management, counselling, resource-based learning, early childhood, behaviour intervention, learning technology or other human services supports to address local needs.

Services must be provided by qualified staff and take into account the requirements of the relative legislation and protocols (e.g., *The Psychologists Act (1997)* and *The Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists Act*).

Services are to be coordinated and provided in the most effective and efficient manner, given the needs, the location of staff and the location of children and youth requiring the services.

The Needs-Based Service Plan

- The Management Committee shall create an annual service plan that demonstrates:
  - evidence of needs assessments and information about current needs of children, youth and their teachers;
  - evidence of involvement of parents, youth, First Nations and other stakeholders in the development of the assessment and plan;
  - services to be provided and level of each service;
  - staffing relevant to the service plan;
  - level of funding to be provided by each of the funding agencies; and,
  - a tentative plan for the next three years.

- The service plan shall be submitted for approval by February 1 of each year to:
  - partner boards (boards of education, health boards, etc.); and
  - funding departments.

- Participating service providers shall integrate the annual service plan of the Shared Service area with their organizational service plan.

Accountability

The Management Committee shall be accountable to boards of education, participating partners and provincial government departments that provide funding. Accountability mechanisms shall include the following:

- approval of the annual needs-based service plan by boards and funding agencies and departments;
- demonstration of partnership in planning and delivery of services; and,

- program reviews *conducted as collaborative ventures* involving Shared Service partners, Saskatchewan Education, Regional Intersectoral Committees and other agencies with vested interests in the well-being of children and youth.